Understanding Social Movements

Theories from the Classical Era to the Present

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field. I offered to give him my lecture notes, and the few articles that I had found discussing one historical development or another.

When we started discussing the project we left it somewhat open-ended as to whether the book would be in some way jointly authored, or solely authored by him. As it has turned out, aside from providing my lecture notes and a few comments on his early drafts of chapters, the book that has resulted has been written solely by him.

My choice of an author has turned out to be felicitous. I think the book is far superior to anything that I could have produced. For one, he has a depth of background in sociological theory that far exceeds my own. For another, he writes just beautifully. The book has a critical edge and a nuanced appreciation of different kinds of work that should be welcomed by its readers.

Introduction

"Steve—This comes out of the blue." This was the first line of an email message I received from Mayer Zald in October 2007. That email began the collaboration Mayer describes in his foreword and led to the book you hold in your hands.

In keeping with Mayer's vision, my goal here is to provide not just a chronological survey but also a sociological history. Such a story must begin with the historicity of the social movement itself. Although there have been many varieties of collective action throughout human history, social movements are distinctly modern.

At the broadest level, social movements subscribe to the basic sociological insight that society is a social construction. For sociology, this construction stands in need of explanation, whereas for social movements, it stands in need of transformation. The premise that society is a human product subject to intervention and transformation is thus the modernist foundation of the social movement (Buechler 2000: 4–11). In slightly different language, "[t]he idea of conscious collective action having the capacity to change society as a whole came only with the era of enlightenment" (Neidhardt and Rucht 1991: 449). As a result, "[s]ocial movements are genuinely modern phenomena. Only in modern society have social movements played a constitutive role in social development" (Eder 1993: 108).

These European scholars echo the earlier insights of an American sociologist who claimed that "the appearance of groups self-consciously oriented to societal change is a peculiar aspect of modern Western social and political life. The idea that change is possible through cooperative activity itself depends on a social and political order that makes such activity possible and probable" (Gusfield 1978: 126).

The origins of the social movement are thus intertwined with the rise of modernity itself. The confluence of capitalism, state building, urbanization, proletarianization, and warfare provided the networks, resources, identities, and grievances for social movements. Great Britain was one such incubator. "Britain's surges of collective activity represented the birth of what we now call the social movement—the sustained, organized challenge to existing authorities in the name of a deprived, excluded or wronged population ... from the 1790s onward we can see a remarkable expansion and regularization of the national social movement not only in Great Britain but elsewhere in the West" (Tilly 1995: 144).

The rise of the social movement marked a qualitative shift in collective action as people intervened repeatedly in national affairs to pursue new claims through large-scale coordinated action. This involved a major shift in the prevailing repertoire of contention from actions that were parochial, bifurcated, and particular to campaigns that were cosmopolitan, modular, and autonomous. The social movement was the product of this shift from immediate, localized, and sporadic expressions of revenge or resistance to sustained, cumulative, organized challenges to national centers of decision making (Tarrow 1994; Tilly 1995, 2004).

Social movements thus have a historically specific origin that parallels the origins of sociology itself. Although movements first appeared in the late eighteenth century, sociological discourse caught up with them in 1850 when Lorenz von Stein "introduced the term 'social movement' into scholarly discussions of popular political striving" (Tilly 2004: 5). Given this common heritage, a sociological history of social movement theory seems long overdue.

Just as social movements have been shaped by larger sociohistorical forces, the study of social movements has been influenced by historical, intellectual, and organizational factors. It is not "internal logics but external concerns [that] are vital to understanding the sociological study of social movements" (Gusfield 1978: 122).

Once we recognize that "political and social perspectives and events, external to sociological theory and research, have played a decisive role in the internal logic of this corner of social science," we can also appreciate how "studies of social movements ... are organized as solutions to problematics—to the analysis of problems set by historical events and interests" (Gusfield 1978: 123–124).

In an effort to capture the multiple influences that bear on the study of social movements, the sociological history provided here emphasizes three dimensions.

First, the study of social movements has been shaped by the prevailing matrix of social science disciplines, their intellectual division of labor, and changes in both over time. Thus, some of the earliest work on movements has unusual scope because the lack of rigid disciplinary boundaries allowed scholars to analyze many different aspects of many different kinds of collective action.

As sharper disciplinary boundaries emerged, theoretical conceptions and research agendas changed. With clearer boundaries between history and sociology, the latter developed some new analytical tools for studying movements, but its explanations tended to become ahistorical and overgeneralized. With clearer boundaries between political science and sociology, the former specialized in more formal, organizational, or institutional aspects of movements and politics, whereas sociology gravitated toward less organized, more spontaneous forms of collective behavior (collapsing social movements into this rubric as well).

Changes in the disciplinary matrix of the social sciences and its corresponding division of labor and topics has thus had a profound effect on how social movements have been defined, theorized, and studied in different eras.

Second, the study of social movements has been influenced by shifts in the broader intellectual climate that transcends particular disciplines. Changes in these metatheoretical assumptions and root images have periodically reoriented the study of social movements as well.

Thus, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, an emphasis on game theory and rational actors arose across several social science disciplines. As these ideas filtered into the study of social movements, they reoriented our understanding of movements toward actor-centered approaches emphasizing costs and benefits and pondering dilemmas like the free-rider problem (when actors hope to share in future benefits without paying the current costs of achieving them).

Shortly thereafter, the rise of more critical and radical perspectives in the social sciences dramatically altered understandings of movements by reversing the value biases of earlier approaches. Yesterday's threats to social order became today's victims of oppression, as movements seeking liberation and autonomy were increasingly seen as legitimate and sometimes heroic challenges to repression and social control.

As a final example, the cultural turn in the humanities and social sciences that began in the 1970s substantially redirected the sociological study of social movements by the 1980s. Questions of resources, strategy, interests, and politics were at least partially displaced by issues of symbols, meanings, identity, and culture.

Third, and most obvious, the prevailing movements in a given sociohistorical period have shaped theoretical conceptions of what movements are and questions about how they arise, develop, recruit, mobilize, strategize, and succeed or fail.

Thus, through much of the nineteenth century, movements were often equated—implicitly or explicitly—with revolutionary challenges to the prevailing social order. Whether analysts wrote as sympathetic advocates, neutral onlookers, or conservative reactionaries, movements were often taken to be (or as having the potential to become) foundational challenges to political regimes and social orders.

In the early twentieth century, the confluence of urbanization, industrialization, and immigration created demographic pressures that led to heightened concerns over crowds and crowd behavior. These phenomena were both defined by and feared for their qualities of spontaneity, contagion, irrationality, and extremism, although subsequent sociological work would reveal a more complex reality below this surface appearance.

Moving toward midcentury, global struggles over communism and fascism inevitably shaped how movements were studied. These specters restored a link between politics and social movements. At the same time, this was understood as a politics of extremism and authoritarianism that posed a threat to capitalist democracies. Popular accounts of "true believers" conveyed fears of fanaticism to the broader public.

The protest cycle of the 1960s reoriented conceptions of social movements once again. Sparked by the civil rights movement in the United States and anticolonial struggles abroad, movements came to be seen by many as legitimate and justifiable challenges to political regimes in need of major transformation. For the next thirty years, movements were intensely studied in a climate that was largely receptive to their grievances and goals. This stance has been modified only slightly with more recent reminders that the social movement form can also serve reactionary forces, as evidenced by neo-Nazi, white supremacist, and terrorist cells that have adopted the social movement repertoire.

Although there are subtle and multifaceted ways that prevailing social movements have shaped the agenda for movement theory and research, sometimes the

connection is more direct. Many current movement scholars are former movement activists who subsequently acquired academic credentials but still draw upon their activist biography to define the agenda for social movement scholarship. Given the common, social constructionist premise that underlies movement activism and sociological inquiry, such biographies should not be surprising.

This sociological history of social movement theory thus recognizes social movements as a distinctly modernist form and proceeds to trace subsequent theoretical development through a shifting context of disciplinary boundaries, intellectual currents, and movement challenges.

Even with this focus, no single volume can do justice to every permutation in social movement theory over more than a century. Several rather different "sociological histories" could be written, and they would all be unavoidably selective in their content—as is this one.

For instance, this account is more attentive to U.S. contributions, although it begins with and occasionally revisits European work. This bias reflects both the voluminous literature that has been produced on social movements in the United States as well as limitations on my own knowledge and expertise.

This account is also organized around major paradigms and schools of thought because they are convenient organizing principles for the story I seek to tell. Although some attention is paid to internal variations within paradigms and external debates between them, there are more idiosyncratic approaches that fall between the cracks of these major paradigms and are likely to be slighted in this story. Although striving for breadth where possible, it is sometimes sacrificed for a more in-depth analysis of the most prominent approaches to social movements across the decades.

Put succinctly, this is one possible sociological history of social movement theory among others that could be written. If this effort inspires other such histories, then it will have fulfilled one of its purposes.

The book is organized as follows.

Part I begins in the European context that gave birth to the modern social movement and sifts the work of major classical theorists in sociology for insights on social movements and collective action. Karl Marx's theory of revolutionary socialist movements is an obvious point of departure, along with some fateful modifications by the Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin. The book then considers the implications of Max Weber's social theory for an understanding of social movements, supplemented by the work of Robert Michels. This section concludes with an appraisal of Émile Durkheim's analysis of social integration and its implications for collective behavior, as complemented by the work of Gustave LeBon.

Part II shifts to the United States and spans four decades from the 1920s into the 1960s. This part of the story begins at the University of Chicago, but distinguishes between two "Chicago Schools" before and after World War II with intriguing differences in their approaches to collective behavior. The story then turns to the rise of political sociology and how this subfield retained a conception of social movements as political actors linked to parties, elections, ideologies, and class cleavages. This part concludes with an overview of several theories that identify social strain or relative deprivation as key mechanisms provoking collective behavior.

Part III traces major paradigm shifts of the 1970s and 1980s in response to new research as well as the 1960s protest cycle. Resource mobilization theory led the challenge to previous approaches and fundamentally reoriented the study of social movements. Soon thereafter, a somewhat parallel approach was recognized as a distinct alternative known as political process theory. Both restored a more political understanding of social movements, but this emphasis was challenged by framing and social constructionist views that reasserted the importance of cultural processes in movement activism. A further challenge to all these U.S. theories came from the European import of new social movement theory, rounding out three decades of active growth in social movement theory and research.

Part IV begins with an overview of this theoretical cross-fertilization, the debates it inspired, and attempts to derive a synthesis out of rival perspectives. At the turn of the century, all these theories (and any possible synthesis) came under a new challenge by an approach emphasizing the dynamics of contention and expanding the field of study far beyond conventional social movements. At the same time, such state-centered theories were challenged by advocates of a more cultural approach to collective action that emphasized the role of emotions in particular. The book concludes by identifying some of the more intriguing or fruitful new directions in social movement theory that promise to reshape the field for years to come.

In closing, I would like to express my appreciation for the wise counsel of Mayer Zald. As noted previously, he supplied the original inspiration for this book. As its chapters took shape, he also offered incisive comments and more references than I felt I could ever track down. He provided a welcome combination of collegial support and intellectual rigor that I'm sure his former students and current colleagues know well. His collaboration has made this a better book than it otherwise would have been.

Chapter Seven

Resource Mobilization Approaches

The phrase "the '60s" has become a cultural cliché and a free-floating signifier. For our purposes, two points are important. First, "the '60s" refers chronologically to a "long decade" stretching almost twenty years from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. Second, this period witnessed one of the most significant waves of social, economic, political, and cultural protest in the entire history of the United States. It is not surprising that these events fundamentally changed sociological approaches to social movements. What is surprising is that almost no one saw it coming.

THE CONTEXT

While the 1960s evoke images of protest, the 1950s connote tranquility. On the surface of American society, there was economic prosperity, steady employment, affordable education, stable families, and burgeoning suburbs. Having survived the Great Depression and a world war, it seemed that a society of material affluence, political stability, and cultural consensus was in the offing.

These expectations remained strong despite countervailing trends such as the Cold War, McCarthyism, the military-industrial complex, racial tensions at home, and anticolonial stirrings abroad. Prominent intellectuals opined that we had reached the end of ideology (Bell 1960) and that the greatest challenges in the future revolved around how to deal with the problems of abundance, leisure, and affluence (Galbraith 1958). There were, to be sure, some intellectual dissidents (Mills 1959; Riesman 1950), but their critical voices were hard to hear above the celebratory atmosphere of the times.

If things seemed quiet on the home front, they were not so abroad. In a time before "globalization" was a household word, anticolonial struggles and national

liberation movements were emerging overseas and providing one of many sparks that would ignite the civil rights movement in the United States. The domestic movement took inspiration from the global ones, providing leverage against a political system whose lofty rhetoric had never matched its actual treatment of so many of its citizens.

The localized protests of poor Southern blacks in the 1950s gradually became a national movement as Northern liberals took up the cause and white students went south to join the movement. Although the movement for African American liberation would take many permutations, perhaps few were as significant as the early struggles that shattered the tranquil and complacent world of white America.

Among many other consequences, the early civil rights movement helped turn the state from a repressive agent or indifferent observer into a reluctant facilitator of movement activism. The Kennedy/Johnson administrations gave rise to the War on Poverty, the Great Society agenda, and other initiatives whereby the federal government actually facilitated activities such as community organizing, local activism, and legal representation for the poor.

It was this early civil rights movement that also triggered the "cascade of social movements" (Zald 2007) now evoked by the phrase "the '60s." White students took their cues from this early mobilization and organized the Free Speech Movement and the Students for a Democratic Society, which then morphed into an antiwar movement that thoroughly disrupted "business as usual" on the nation's campuses (and the broader society) by 1970. These actions, in turn, spurred countercultural and environmental movements, and added momentum to, and provocations for, a nascent feminist movement and a subsequent mobilization for gay and lesbian liberation. Although movements often come in cycles, it is difficult to overestimate the impact of this cycle on society in general and the study of social movements in particular.

The societal transition from tranquility to turmoil was mirrored in a theoretical shift from consensus to conflict. The 1950s were the apogee of functionalist theory in sociology, with its vision of society as a social system of integrated parts fulfilling functions, maintaining equilibrium, and managing tensions. A theory that seemed persuasive to many in the 1950s appeared increasingly irrelevant to many more in the 1960s. Even by the late 1950s, some sociologists were developing the alternative approach of conflict theory (Coser 1956; Dahrendorf 1959); within a decade, devastating (if sometimes overstated) criticisms of functionalism had created space for alternative theories of power, conflict, and domination (Mills 1959; Gouldner 1970).

These sociohistorical events changed sociology in other ways as well. The discipline became academically popular and its rapid expansion dovetailed with a more politicized, leftward drift among many of the baby boomer generation who entered sociology (McAdam 2007: 414–418ff). The upshot was that "[b]y 1970, many younger sociologists, students and new faculty had come to think of sociology as a sociological imagination that would remake the world, while the older generation had thought of it as a profession that would help manage the world" (Lemert 2008: 100).

In the study of social movements, a paradigm shift that no one foresaw in the early 1960s appeared almost predestined by the late 1970s. Under the weight of social change, political protest, cultural conflict, theoretical shifts, and activist biographies, the older collective behavior tradition was seen by many as ill-suited to studying new forms of collective action.

The newer paradigm challenged the accepted wisdom about collective behavior in several ways. First, it rejected the subsumption of social movements under collective behavior, claiming that the former were different enough from the latter to warrant their own mode of analysis (McAdam 2007: 421). Second, social movements were seen as enduring, patterned, and quasi-institutionalized, thereby challenging the traditional classification of them as noninstitutional behavior. Third, newer approaches viewed participants in social movements as "at least as rational as those who study them" (Schwartz 1976: 135), reversing the premise of irrationality that still lingered over the collective behavior tradition.

Finally, the psychological readings of collective behavior were displaced by a political interpretation of social movements as power struggles over conflicting interests that shared many organizational dynamics with more institutionalized forms of conflict (Oberschall 1973; McCarthy and Zald 1973, 1977; Tilly 1978). In sharp contrast with the collective behavior tradition, the new paradigm viewed social movements as normal, rational, political challenges by aggrieved groups, thereby recasting the study of collective action from an instance of deviance and social disorganization to a topic for political and organizational sociology.

The various strands of this new approach were initially designated by the generic name "resource mobilization." Although this diverse congeries of ideas would soon be differentiated into separate approaches, the rise of resource mobilization in the mid- to late 1970s was the first paradigm in the history of the discipline to place social movements at the center of the analysis. After almost a century of being ontological orphans of collective behavior or foster children of political sociology, movements came into their own in the politics of the 1960s and in the theories of the 1970s.

EARLY STRANDS OF RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Alongside conflict theory, another theoretical challenger to the hegemony of functionalist theory that emerged in the 1960s was exchange or rational choice theory (Homans 1974; Blau 1964). If functionalism saw people as motivated by common values, rational choice theory saw them as driven by self-interest, leading them to choose courses of action that maximized benefits and minimized costs.

This approach derived from economics, and it was one economist in particular whose work had a major impact on the study of social movements. Mancur Olson's (1965) *The Logic of Collective Action* began with the premise that people are rational actors and proceeded to explore the challenges this posed for mobilizing collective action. Olson's work was widely cited in the social movement literature because it

literature. It opened it to a wider audience. It gave it a new strength" (Shils 1980: 185). The Chicago School had three broad foci: social psychology, social organization, and social ecology (Abbott 1999: 6). The former analyzed individuals in a social context, while studies of organization and ecology helped interpret that context.

Chicago sociology and its approach to collective behavior were forged in a distinctive intellectual climate. In some respects, Chicago sociology was an emergent product of behaviorism and pragmatism. When the behaviorist emphasis on close scientific observation of human behavior was tempered with a pragmatist appreciation of interactively negotiated meanings and symbols, a distinctive sociology was created. The pragmatist premises of social philosophers John Dewey and George Herbert Mead thus helped see "human behavior as problem-solving and emergent rather than controlled and shaped by external 'forces'" (Gusfield 1978: 129).

Pragmatism thereby reinforced the processual approach of the Chicago School. It helped its practitioners see social reality not as static or fixed, but rather as an interactive outcome of people's actions in the world. Pragmatism also helped avoid the trap of reification by emphasizing how concepts were simply convenient labels for dynamic, ongoing social processes that must remain the focus of study.

Alongside intellectual influences, Chicago's social and political climate shaped the sociology that emerged there. Although change was widespread, "few cities anywhere in the Western world changed more rapidly in such a short time than did Chicago in the decades at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries" (Lemert 2008: 62). This rapidly growing metropolis was a naturally occurring sociological laboratory, and multiple "experiments" were underway involving industrialization, urbanization, immigration, Americanization, social disorganization, crime, and delinquency. The city and its urbanizing processes were the setting and the topic of much Chicago School sociology.

Indeed, there was "a 'demand' for sociology in the city of Chicago. Movements to improve the condition of the poor and to improve the quality of public institutions were also very active and from the first they drew to themselves the professors of the new university ... It was perhaps the first time that academic sociologists as a class were welcomed by reformers with much practical experience" (Shils 1980: 183).

The Progressive Era embraced the pragmatist belief that science and knowledge were instrumental in the analysis and resolution of social problems. Successful reform, however, required accurate description and analysis, and sociology provided the tools to accomplish these goals.

A process-oriented sociology was thus reinforced by a pragmatist philosophy and a political reformism that encouraged active engagement with the social world. All these forces shaped an understanding of collective behavior as both outcome and cause of social change.

PARK AND BURGESS

Robert Park (1864–1944) was a leading figure in the Chicago School. In the 1880s, he studied literature, history, and philosophy with John Dewey at Michigan. In the

1890s, he worked as a newspaper editor and reporter and studied philosophy with William James at Harvard. In 1899, he went to Germany, studied with Georg Simmel, and wrote a dissertation on *The Crowd and the Public* in 1904.

This text provided a bridge between late nineteenth century European crowd theory and early twentieth century U.S. collective behavior theory. Gustave Le Bon's treatment of the crowd is a major pillar of that bridge. The first of Park's three chapters is an extensive and largely positive discussion of Le Bon's work on crowds.

Thus, Park notes that for Le Bon, the crowd is less a matter of spatial concentration than a psychological condition in which individual self-consciousness disappears as feelings and thoughts move in a similar direction. The process sounds like evolution in reverse: "a heterogeneous mass under previous conditions is transformed into a homogeneous entity" (Park 1972: 13). With this blending, people in crowds lose the capacity for intelligent action as the crowd reduces their capacities to the lowest common denominator.

Crowds thereby exhibit some standard characteristics: heightened emotional sensitivity and capriciousness, increased suggestibility and credulity, exaggerated and one-sided opinions, intolerance and despotism, and personal disinterestedness and unselfishness (Park 1972: 15–16). Park argues that all these traits are different manifestations of the same underlying condition of suggestibility that is a defining feature of the crowd. This suggestibility "is generated by the reciprocal influence of individual emotions and ... affects all members of the crowd in the same way" (Park 1972: 16).

Park's discussion of the public is more scattered and less complete, but it is evident that publics are a fundamentally different form of collective behavior. Although instincts dominate in the crowd, reason prevails in publics. Indeed, critical attitudes, diverse opinions, prudent judgments, and rational reflection are defining elements of publics that set them apart from crowds.

Whereas crowds erase individual differences and reduce their members to a lowest common denominator, publics recognize such differences as the basis for reasoned discussion and debate. Publics can thus arrive at a consensus through discussion without necessarily imposing a unanimous stance on their members (Park 1972: xiv). This discursive capacity of the public sets it apart from the crowd; however "[w]hen the public ceases to be critical, it dissolves or is transformed into a crowd" (Park 1972: 80).

Although much of Park's dissertation underscores the differences between the crowd and the public, a second theme concerns their similarities compared with routine institutionalized behavior. Thus, both crowds and publics are temporary, spontaneous, and fleeting forms of association. Unlike institutional behavior, crowds and publics have no traditions and they do not flow predictably from past to present and future.

Despite their ephemeral nature, the crowd and the public are two fundamental mechanisms for producing social change because they exist outside the normative guidelines and institutional patterns of everyday society. In highlighting these two forms, Park transplanted European assumptions about crowd behavior while juxtaposing publics as a more rational and deliberative type of collective behavior.

One of the earliest codifications of the Chicago approach to collective behavior is in *An Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Park and Burgess 1921). The book contains an eighty-five-page chapter on collective behavior, situated between equally long chapters on "social control" and "progress." The chapter is an amalgamation of original text, lengthy excerpts from Le Bon's work and Park's dissertation, and adaptations from other writers describing examples of collective behavior. Because it sets the stage for decades of work on collective behavior, it merits a closer look.

The chapter begins by noting that when people gather together, their behavior is social to the extent that each individual is influenced by the action of other individuals. It becomes collective when each acts under the influence of a shared mood or state of mind. "Collective behavior, then, is the behavior of individuals under the influence of an impulse that is common and collective, an impulse, in other words, that is the result of social interaction" (Park and Burgess 1921: 865).

The most elementary form of collective behavior is social unrest. It involves milling that stimulates circular reaction as people react to each other's initial actions and subsequent responses in an escalating fashion. The stage of social unrest is significant because it represents "a breaking up of the established routine and a preparation for new collective action" (Park and Burgess 1921: 866).

Turning to the topic of crowds, the authors follow Le Bon's analysis of how milling in crowds creates social contagion and a collective impulse to act, concluding that "[w]hen the crowd acts it becomes a mob" (Park and Burgess 1921: 869). This is in sharp contrast with publics, with their capacity for critical discussion, diverse opinions, and rational reflection.

Although acknowledging the public, it is the crowd that frames the subsequent discussion of collective behavior. To clarify the nature of crowds, the text reproduces descriptions of "animal crowds," including sheep flocks, cattle herds, and wolf packs. Although acknowledging that human crowds can mimic animal crowds when they dissolve into a panic or stampede, they also distinguish human crowds on the basis of common purposes and collective representations that are absent in animal crowds.

The text then reprints several pages from Le Bon (1896/1960) on the "psychological crowd" that reiterate some of his more dubious and stereotypical characterizations of crowds as involving irrational impulses, unconscious personalities, mass contagion, diminished intelligence, criminal tendencies, and the like.

This is followed by a briefer passage from Park's dissertation that underscores the role of rapport (involving "contagious excitement and heightened suggestibility") in crowd behavior. Such rapport, along with a common focus of attention and collective representations, seem to be the defining elements of the crowd for Park and Burgess. The authors say little more about these components, leaving the impression that their analysis of the crowd remains heavily indebted to Le Bon's work.

When the chapter finally moves from crowds to mass movements, it consists entirely of excerpts from other writers on various movements. The chapter concludes with brief comments that dispense with mass movements in fewer than two pages and bundle together "fashion, reform and revolution" in an equally brief treatment.

Although collective behavior may not be reducible to crowds for the early Chicago School, it is evident that the crowd provides a fundamental template for analyzing collective behavior and that Le Bon's work is central to this template. As the authors conclude, "[a]ll great mass movements tend to display, to a greater or less extent, the characteristics that Le Bon attributes to crowds" (Park and Burgess 1921: 871).

BLUMER'S COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR

Eighteen years after the Park and Burgess text appeared, Herbert Blumer published his overview of collective behavior theory (the 1939 original was prominently reprinted in 1951). It is often taken as the definitive statement of the early Chicago School on this topic. As such, it is striking how closely it follows earlier treatments of the crowd while expanding the analysis of social movements.

Blumer notes that virtually all of sociology's subject matter could be considered collective behavior, but then distinguishes behavior that is routinely governed by norms and traditions from more elementary, spontaneous, unregulated forms. As a subfield within the discipline, collective behavior studies the latter and the manner in which it may develop into more organized social behavior.

"Circular reaction is the natural mechanism of elementary collective behavior" (Blumer 1951: 171). Through interstimulation, people's behavior reproduces and amplifies some initial stimulation. Given Blumer's subsequent establishment of the symbolic interactionist tradition, it is striking that he distinguishes circular reaction from interpretative interaction. The interpretation that intercedes between stimulus and response in most human interaction is absent in circular reaction.

Elementary collective behavior is likely to arise "under conditions of unrest or disturbance in the usual forms of living or routines of life" (Blumer 1951: 171). When "restlessness" is part of circular reaction, it becomes contagious and leads to social unrest. In this state, people are highly sensitized to each other's presence, and rapport develops.

Once social unrest occurs, people's behavior becomes random, erratic, aimless, excited, apprehensive, irritable, and suggestible. "In a state of social unrest, people are psychologically unstable, suffering from disturbed impulses and feelings" (Blumer 1951: 173). Despite—or perhaps because of—this disorientation, "social unrest may be regarded as the crucible out of which emerge new forms of organized activity—such as social movements, reforms, revolutions, religious cults, spiritual awakenings, and new moral orders" (Blumer 1951: 173).

Several mechanisms spark elementary collective behavior. Through milling, individuals become highly sensitized to each other's presence. Like Park and Burgess before him, Blumer cites animal herds (and hypnotic subjects) to describe how this heightened rapport leads people to respond to one another "quickly, directly, unwittingly" (Blumer 1951: 174). Milling and rapport can lead to collective excitement that heightens emotional arousal and makes people more unstable and

irresponsible. These mechanisms may then culminate in social contagion, as the "relatively rapid, unwitting, and nonrational dissemination of a mood, impulse, or form of conduct; it is well exemplified by the spread of crazes, manias, and fads" (Blumer 1951: 176).

Blumer then provides a taxonomy of collective behavior. Predictably enough, crowds are the first type to be discussed. Crowds emerge when some exciting event sparks milling, leading to a common object of attention and impulses leading to action. Casual crowds (watching a street performer) and conventionalized crowds (attending a baseball game) are two rudimentary types.

The acting, aggressive crowd is one in which individual self-concern and critical judgment are overwhelmed by the suggestibility, rapport, and common focus of attention of the group. Blumer thus notes, as Park and Burgess did before him, that a common strategy of crowd control is to redirect attention from its original focus.

The expressive or dancing crowd is a more introverted group that has no external goal or plan of action. Its behavior often involves rhythmic expression and catharsis. Following Durkheim, expressive crowds can create collective ecstasy that may be projected onto objects or symbols that become sacred to the crowd.

Both types of crowds have the potential to break up old forms of social organization and promote new ones. Acting crowds seek this externally through purposive social change and a new political order. Expressive crowds seek this internally through collective rituals and a new religious order.

The mass is another type of collective behavior. Its members are heterogeneous and anonymous. They have little interaction with each other, so the mass is more loosely organized than the crowd. Masses consist of alienated individuals who have become detached from localized cultures and groups. This recalls Durkheim's analysis of anomie and egoism while also anticipating mass society theory.

The public is the final type of elementary collective grouping. Echoing Park, publics are defined by issues that generate divided opinions and ongoing discussion. Unlike later approaches to public opinion that would merely aggregate individual attitudes, Blumer's concept retained an emphasis on how interaction within the public collectively shaped their views. At the same time, publics are fleeting and spontaneous groups with no tradition, we-feeling, or conscious identity.

The crowd, mass, and public are thus the major elementary collective groups; they signal social change. "They have the dual character of implying the disintegration of the old and the appearance of the new" (Blumer 1951: 196). In virtually every respect, Blumer's analysis to this point is a faithful if slightly updated rendition of the Park and Burgess approach.

Where Blumer departs from this approach is in the more detailed and analytical treatment of social movements. Movements are conceptualized as "collective enterprises to establish a new order of life" (Blumer 1951: 199). They begin, however, on the "primitive level" of the collective behavior already discussed; they are initially "amorphous, poorly organized, and without form" (Blumer 1951: 199). Only in the later stages of a movement career does it acquire traditions, customs, and leadership that allow a more stable form of social organization.

"Cultural drifts" are gradual but pervasive changes in people's values and self-conceptions that may trigger general social movements as vague, indefinite responses. Given their inchoate nature, general social movements resemble the mass and emerge when people are detached from localized social moorings. Both masses and general social movements remain "formless in organization and inarticulate in expression" (Blumer 1951: 201).

Just as cultural drifts are the crucible for general social movements, the latter are "the setting out of which develop specific social movements" (Blumer 1951: 202). These crystallize previously vague and amorphous sentiments and orient them to a particular objective. Such movements become minisocieties, with organization, structure, leadership, culture, a division of labor, and we-feeling.

The emergent quality of this process is captured in a stage theory of social movements that foreshadows other approaches that describe movement stages, life histories, or careers that culminate in either movement decline or institutionalization.

Blumer's first stage is the social unrest already discussed as the starting mechanism of elementary collective behavior. Recall that "[i]n a state of social unrest, people are psychologically unstable, suffering from disturbed impulses and feelings" (Blumer 1951: 173). Blumer sees the role of the agitator as central to creating and spreading social unrest.

The second stage is popular excitement, which relies on milling while developing more focused objectives. Here, leaders are more likely to be prophets or reformers. The third stage is formalization, when "the movement becomes more clearly organized with rules, policies, tactics, and discipline" (Blumer 1951: 203), and its leader more closely resembles a statesman.

The final stage is institutionalization, in which "the movement has crystallized into a fixed organization with a definite personnel and structure to carry into execution the purposes of the movement" (Blumer 1951: 203). In this final stage, leadership has evolved from agitator, prophet, and statesman to administrator.

Distinct mechanisms propel movements through these stages. Agitation arouses people and makes them available for the movement. Successful agitation must gain attention, excite people, arouse feelings, and provide direction. When it works, it changes people's self-conception.

The development of *esprit de corps* is a second mechanism; it foreshadows more recent work on collective identity. *Esprit de corps* develops by underscoring the relation between the in-group and out-group(s), by fostering informal fellowship, and by engaging in ceremonial behavior that reinforces social bonds.

A third mechanism is morale; it creates a stronger group will and commitment to a collective purpose. Morale reinforces "a conviction of the rectitude of the purpose of the movement" (Blumer 1951: 208), and it may invoke sacred symbols; patron saints; and various creeds, myths, and literatures that elucidate its *raison d'être.*

A fourth mechanism is group ideology. It often serves multiple purposes as a statement of objectives, a condemnation of the status quo, a justification of the movement, and a repository of movement myths. Effective ideologies often blend both a scholarly and a popular dimension to achieve these multiple objectives.

The final mechanism involves tactics. These must address three basic tasks of "gaining adherents, holding adherents, and reaching objectives" (Blumer 1951: 211). Successful movements rely upon all five of these mechanisms to move from initial social unrest through popular excitement and formalization to institutionalization.

Blumer's treatment of social movements concludes with a loose typology. Perhaps the most significant aspect of his discussion of reform and revolutionary movements is an unwillingness to see even these forms of collective behavior as political phenomena. Thus, the "primary function of the reform movement is probably not so much the bringing about of social change, as it is to reaffirm the ideal values of a given society" (Blumer 1951: 213). Revolutionary movements, on the other hand, seek to create an "uncompromising group" out of "have-nots", which "makes its function that of introducing a new set of essentially religious values" (Blumer 1951: 214).

Blumer's work has been summarized in such detail because it is arguably the most-often cited example of the early Chicago School's view of collective behavior. As such, three conclusions are worth noting. First, Blumer's treatment of collective behavior is heavily indebted to Park and Burgess, who in turn relied heavily on Le Bon's analysis of the crowd. Second, Blumer departs most significantly from them in his more extensive treatment of social movements. Third, however, even this more extensive treatment of movements sees them as originating in more elementary processes of collective behavior. For Blumer, movements remain derivative of elementary collective behavior in general and the crowd in particular. That idea would subsequently attract much criticism from proponents of a more political view of social movements.

THE CONTEXT REVISITED

This early and foundational work on collective behavior appeared at the height of the Chicago School's prominence. "From about the outbreak of the First World War to the end of the Second, the Department of Sociology of the University of Chicago was the center *par excellence* of sociological studies in the United States and in the world, although in the last decade of its dominance it was living from the momentum of the preceding two decades" (Shils 1980: 215).

The relative decline of the Chicago School after World War II involved internal and external factors. Internally, some of the major figures of the school either departed or retreated from the forefront of sociological work. There were sharp disputes among remaining members about the direction of the department, prompting additional departures (Abbott 1999, Ch. 2). As a result, "the fundamental ideas of Chicago sociology were coming to a standstill and were not being extended or deepened" (Shils 1980: 217).

Externally, other universities were challenging Chicago's predominance and advocating different approaches. From its unrivalled preeminence between the wars, Chicago lost ground to Harvard and Columbia after World War II. Although its approach to doing sociology remained distinctive, it was now one among several competing approaches rather than the *sine qua non* of sociological scholarship.

Like most "rise and fall" narratives, this is a bit simplistic. Closer inspection reveals a "second" Chicago School that consolidated in the post-war period (Fine 1995). The members of this second school both continued and modified the approach of the first, and this is nowhere more evident than in the study of collective behavior.

The continuities are evident in an ongoing emphasis on emergent interactive processes. The distinctiveness of this approach actually became more evident as rivals appeared. Although the Chicago School emphasized process, the Harvard approach postulated strains as the root of collective behavior. Somewhat later, a more politically oriented Michigan approach would emphasize resources as crucial (Snow and Davis 1995).

Perhaps equally significant, the second Chicago School departed from its predecessors on several key issues. "They tended to demystify the concept of impulse, reject the mechanical nature of circular reaction, and abandon the pathological connotations of contagion. They emphasized the continuity of collective and institutional action, rejecting or qualifying the classical assertion of Le Bon ... that crowds are characterized by spontaneity, suggestibility and mental unity" (Snow and Davis 1995: 193). The second Chicago School thereby avoided some of the pitfalls of its predecessor.

TURNER AND KILLIAN

The first edition of Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian's seminal text on collective behavior appeared in 1957, and substantially revised versions followed in 1972 and 1987. Each mirrored the Park and Burgess (1921) volume by interspersing original text with supporting case material from others. This book is a core statement of the second Chicago School that illustrates both continuity and transformation in this approach.

The authors define collective behavior as "forms of social behavior in which usual conventions cease to guide social action and people collectively transcend, bypass, or subvert established institutional patterns and structures" (Turner and Killian 1987: 3). Their focus is thus group behavior that lacks conventional organization or departs from established institutional patterns.

Turner and Killian distance themselves from a "pathological view" of crowd behavior exemplified by Everett Martin's early characterization of the crowd as "people going crazy together" (cited in Turner and Killian 1987: 5). Although they acknowledge that Park and Blumer may have relied too heavily on Le Bon's view of the crowd, they assert that a "conscientious reading" of the Chicago School tradition would show that its major writers "all have rejected the assumption that collective behavior is necessarily less rational than institutional behavior" (Turner and Killian 1987: 5)

In a different vein, Blumer once claimed that the main function of a reform movement is to reaffirm societal values. This might be seen as the point of departure for Joseph Gusfield's (1963/1986) study of the American temperance movement, which provides a second example of the Chicago approach to social movements. Gusfield calls this movement a "symbolic crusade," a label that could apply to many moral reform movements.

Whereas class movements and politics are about the distribution of material resources, status movements and politics are about the prestige of groups making claims. The conflict is over values and styles of life, and the status group that prevails in such a conflict sees its values become dominant and perhaps codified into law.

Through much of the nineteenth century, the temperance movement had a dual focus as a type of status politics. On one hand, it was a form of social control whereby white, native-born Protestants sought to reshape the behavior and values of immigrant groups whose culture differed from the mainstream. On the other hand, practicing temperance was also thought to be crucial to the success and social mobility of the dominant group. Temperance was thus a way of sanctioning those who were different and reinforcing the values and standing of one's own group.

Over time, the temperance movement shifted from assimilative reform (saving the drinker) to coercive reform (punishing the deviant). The campaign culminated in the passage of Prohibition in 1920, which was a potent symbol of native-born, Protestant, middle-class domination. By the same token, its repeal only thirteen years later symbolized the decline of this status group, its values, and its lifestyle.

Gusfield interprets temperance as a form of status politics that is more prevalent among middle classes, in which material comfort often combines with status anxiety. Status politics often appeal to a fundamentalist strain in society and express unease with change, modernity, and diversity. The value of this approach to understanding the "culture wars" and their associated movements of recent decades is readily apparent.

Much the same may be said for Gusfield's summary of his work as a "dramatistic theory of status politics." This is "because, like drama, it represents an action which is make-believe but which moves its audience" (Gusfield 1986: 166). It is also a way of studying symbolic action in which "the object referred to has a range of meaning beyond itself" (Gusfield 1986: 167). Gusfield thereby deploys Chicago sociology and symbolic interactionism to provide an incisive analysis of an important type of social movement and its associated politics.

CONCLUSION

The Chicago School(s) arose in a specific sociohistorical setting and developed an equally distinctive approach to the study of collective behavior. It dominated U.S. sociology from the 1920s into the 1950s, and it survives today in several guises, including framing and social constructionist approaches to social movements.

Partly because of its prior dominance, the Chicago School came in for more than its share of criticism as rival approaches sought to create space for their alternatives in the 1960s and 1970s. Critics argued that the Chicago approach was too individualistic or psychological, that it ignored the political dimension of collective action, that it failed to recognize persisting organizational features of collective action, and that it ignored "solidarity" as a better predictor of collective action than "breakdown." Finally, critics claimed that despite protestations to the contrary, this approach still viewed collective behavior in a negative light and as an expression of underlying irrationality (Currie and Skolnick 1970; Tilly, Tilly, and Tilly 1975; McAdam 1982).

As often happens when new paradigms challenge old ones, the critics sometimes overstated their case and glossed over variations and distinctions among their targets. This provoked selective defenses of the collective behavior tradition (G. Marx 1972; Aguirre and Quarantelli 1983; Turner and Killian 1987; Snow and Davis 1994). This is not the place to reiterate the debate, but rather to offer some brief conclusions based on a close reading of the Chicago School texts summarized in this chapter.

Concerning the "first" Chicago School, it seems undeniable that the writings of Park, Burgess, and Blumer rely heavily on Le Bon's analysis of the irrational crowd as a template for collective behavior. In part, this reflects the sociohistorical climate of the time and the fears provoked by fascist and communist movements that were explicitly referenced in Blumer's (1951: 209) discussion of social movements.

At the same time, Park in particular recognized the positive, creative potential of collective behavior and refused to reduce it to a purely destructive, negative force (Rule 1988: 97ff; Oberschall 1973: 14ff). Perhaps it is fairest to say that the early Chicago School displayed a profound tension between the irrationalist tradition it inherited from European crowd theorists and its own efforts to move toward a more well-rounded approach to collective behavior.

Concerning the "second" Chicago School, Turner and Killian (1987: 13–15) explicitly repudiated the presumption of irrationality that haunted earlier work. This repudiation was not always recognized by critics who tended to collapse both schools together, although it was acknowledged by more sympathetic interpreters (Snow and Davis 1995).

There remained a different kind of tension, however. Having set aside the irrationality issue, it became clearer that the inclusion of social movements with more elementary forms of collective behavior (out of which they supposedly originate) was becoming increasingly strained. In introducing a discussion of emergent norms, Turner and Killian say that "[t]he crowd, the most easily observed type of collectivity, will be used as the model" (1987: 75). In fact, the crowd seems to be the template not just for emergent norms but also for their overall theory even as they seek to extend it to other types of collective behavior.

As a result, their later treatment of social movements incorporates much work from other traditions that feels tacked on rather than logically derived from their underlying premises. Perhaps recognizing this, the authors eventually note that "social

movements fall near the boundary that separates collective behavior from strictly organized and institutionalized behavior" (Turner and Killian 1987: 230).

Proponents of the collective behavior tradition have sought to maintain the linkage between elementary collective behavior and social movements. Others have noted that "[s]urely there is something ironic about this concern with saving the *concept* of collective behavior. The term was originally put forward to designate a category of phenomena whose conceptual unity was considered apparent. Now that unity appears more obscure, and analysts resort to increasingly tortuous rules to propound a conceptual rule that will include the changeful processes of original interest" (Rule 1988: 115; italics in original). In the end, the Chicago approach may have lost its dominance not so much over the issue of irrationality as over the implausibility of analyzing social movements through the lens of collective behavior.

Chapter Five

Political Sociology and Political Movements

This chapter moves from Chicago to New York. The relative decline of Chicago sociology was accompanied, and partially caused, by the rise of rival approaches at other institutions, including Columbia University. The approaches discussed here contrast sharply with the Chicago School because they view social movements as a form of political contention. At the same time, one aspect of this political approach examined psychological dynamics that predisposed some people to join extremist movements. The premise of irrationality that had haunted the Chicago School thus found a new niche in studies of extremist politics.

THE CONTEXT

From a contemporary perspective, the disconnect between collective behavior and political conflict in Chicago School sociology is one of its most puzzling features. From a historical perspective attuned to sociological patterns of disciplinary and intellectual development, it becomes more understandable.

In the late nineteenth century, the boundaries between political science and sociology began to sharpen. This brought benefits to both disciplines by allowing them to ask more focused questions and develop more sophisticated methods and analytical techniques to pursue their respective questions.

This process also had drawbacks. The sharpened boundaries around these disciplines left some issues on the margins of both. Although some topics were readily adopted by one discipline or another, others were "ontological orphans." They existed in the real world, but they were not adopted by either of the more sharply differentiated disciplines.

Such was the fate of social movements. Sociology largely ceded questions of politics to its sister discipline of political science. The latter, in turn, defined its subject matter as the organized and institutional dimensions of states, governments, elections, and parties. Because social movements involve extra-institutional elements, they were off the radar screens of political scientists.

Thus, sociology analyzed collective behavior as an apolitical phenomenon, and political science studied politics as an institutional system; neither was conceptually predisposed to examine the politics of social movements. Movements were too political for sociology and too unorthodox for political science. As a result, important questions about movements and the political system were not addressed.

This situation was partially redressed with the rise of political sociology as a subfield within sociology. While examining some of the same topics as political science, political sociology placed the institutional political system within a broader context that included economic, social, cultural, and extra-institutional political dynamics. In some respects, it was a return to questions (if not necessarily answers) posed by Marx and Weber. This contextualization opened the door to studying social movements.

One important incubator of political sociology was Columbia University, which "by the early 1950s markedly surpassed Chicago as a center" (Shils 1980: 219). Columbia's impact on sociology as a whole is often attributed to "two major intellectual personalities, Robert Merton and Paul Lazarsfeld, who combined what was most 'needed' in sociology: ingeniously contrived techniques of survey research with interesting, quite specific substantive hypotheses" (Shils 1980: 219). This new style of sociology was institutionalized in the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia.

Sociology at Columbia also reflected broader trends in the social sciences and intellectual climate. Across many disciplines, there was a renewed emphasis on forging genuinely scientific approaches on a par with the natural sciences. This required solid empirical data that, in turn, prompted the development of new statistical tools, sampling techniques, and research methodologies to deliver the data and redeem the promise of a scientific approach.

At Columbia, these broader intellectual ambitions were married to specifically sociological concerns. Lazarsfeld not only advocated survey methods and quantitative analysis of topics like political attitudes; he also linked individual attitudes to group memberships and social influences through cluster sampling. Although these approaches informed research on many issues, it was Seymour Martin Lipset (trained at Columbia) who did more than anyone to deploy them in the study of political sociology in general and political movements in particular.

Another example of new rigor in analytical methods was the revival of comparative-historical methods in the social sciences generally and in sociology specifically. Lipset, along with Stein Rokkan (1967), was a part of this development through work comparing political party systems and voting patterns across industrial democracies. This revival was also evident in the ambitious comparative and historical approach of Barrington Moore Jr. to reveal differing paths to modernity.

The renewed interest in political movements was also sparked by movements and challenges on the domestic and global scene. The Great Depression sparked both revolutionary and reactionary movements in the United States while fascism abroad helped trigger World War II. Social movement scholars therefore returned to "big questions" about broad movement ideologies, social class bases, and shifting political alliances that sustained movements across the political spectrum.

One subset of these questions examined the appeal of Nazism, fascism, and other right-wing political movements. Such questions were raised by Hitler's rise to power and transplanted to the United States by émigré German intellectuals. There was a domestic version of these questions as well, as McCarthyism prompted both popular and scholarly studies of extremist movements.

Under all these influences, the study of social movements underwent some major transitions in a relatively brief time. This chapter documents some of these transitions.

A EUROPEAN IMPORT

Before turning to Columbia and Lipset's impact, we begin with a significant text by Rudolf Heberle (1951). Its very title illustrates the theme of this chapter: *Social Movements: An Introduction to Political Sociology.* Heberle wrote a dissertation on the Swedish labor movement while in Germany, studied in the United States, returned to Germany, and then fled back to the United States when Hitler's rise to power interfered with the publication of several studies he had conducted on political movements. When his text appeared in 1951, he was a sociology professor at Louisiana State University.

The status of Heberle's text is suggested by an unlikely source. In the first edition of Turner and Killian's book on collective behavior, they list Heberle's book at the top of a list of recommended readings on social movements. They include the annotation that "[a]lthough slanted toward political organization rather than collective behavior, this book is the most adequate sociological treatment of social movements available" (1957: 535). The understated compliment illustrates the tension between these approaches while according a prominent status to the German émigré scholar.

Heberle conceptualizes a social movement as a social collective whose intention is to change the patterns of human relations and social institutions that characterize a society. Group identity and solidarity are essential elements, as social movements are akin to Marx's notion of a fully developed social class. Movements must therefore be treated as groups, and they must furthermore be distinguished from trends, tendencies, pressure groups, or political parties. Movements also involve ideologies or constitutive ideas that provide integration and inspire followers. Summarizing a sociological approach to the field, Heberle counsels students of social movements to dissect their ideologies, social psychology, social foundations, structure, strategy, tactics, and functions.

by an early Chicago sociologist. The difference is that he offers it as a historically specific analysis of the appeal of Nazism rather than a broad generalization about collective behavior. Perhaps that is why the imputation of irrationality that seems dubious as a generic feature of collective behavior sounds at least somewhat more plausible in this case.

Although the strengths of the political approach derive from its macro-orientation, its weaknesses flow from its relative inattention to micro-level processes. This approach has little to say about motivation, recruitment, conversion, or interpersonal dynamics within movements. Although identifying the broad social base of a movement is helpful, the tougher question is differential recruitment: Why do some members of a given class or status group join while others do not? This approach is largely silent on such questions. This is less a criticism than a reminder that all perspectives are necessarily partial; they inevitably illuminate some questions while leaving others in the shadows.

There is a more basic issue with the political sociology approach to social movements. This chapter opened by identifying movements as ontological orphans not fully claimed by a sociology studying collective behavior and a political science addressing institutional politics. Political sociology began to bridge this gap, but even here social movements typically remain tangential to the main story. Put differently, social movements become of interest to this approach when they interact with other parts of the polity rather than having enough intrinsic interest to place them center stage. Thus, Lipset's study of agrarian socialism is really about how a movement became a party, whereas his work on the printers' union is a study of organizational behavior rather than a social movement per se.

The nebulous status of social movements was also reinforced by the social climate of the late 1950s. Proclamations about the affluent society and the end of ideology reinforced a sense that major social conflicts and struggles over material redistribution were rapidly becoming a thing of the past. A focus on the affluent problems of angst, anxiety, alienation, and the "lonely crowd" was displacing older materialist concerns with conflict, coercion, control, and class struggle.

Characterizing the marginality of movements up to the early 1960s, one authority noted that "[a]s a field, social movements remain diffuse and fluid; fitting in different ways into the corpus of contemporary sociology. One leg stands in the field of collective behavior and the other, in political sociology. One arm is extended toward the study of social change and the other waves at the field of social control" (Gusfield 1978: 135).

At the risk of a tortured metaphor, perhaps it could be said that with the development of political sociology in the 1950s, social movements went from ontological orphans to foster children of the discipline. It would take another decade of social change and two decades of theoretical development before they became full-fledged members of the family.

Chapter Six

Strain and Deprivation Models

The collective behavior approach and some versions of the political sociology perspective traced movements back to strains or deprivations in social order. By the 1960s, this logic appeared in several guises linked to distinct theoretical paradigms and contexts. Their convergence around the notion of social strain or deprivation as the cause of social movements is sufficient, however, to treat them together in this chapter.

THE CONTEXT

Strain and deprivation models relegate Marx and Weber to supporting roles while bringing Durkheim back for an encore. As sociology's preeminent classical theorist of social integration, his work provides clues for detecting the strains, disintegration, and breakdown that can precipitate collective action.

By the 1950s, however, sociology also had a new theory of social order in the guise of structural-functionalism. Like Durkheim's theory, it focused on the forces that provide social integration. It also recognized, however, that the complexity of modern social structures all but guaranteed episodes of strain, ambiguity, deprivation, or breakdown. One manifestation of these pressures was collective action.

Although there was no single institutional center for strain theories of social movements, Harvard University was the closest candidate for the role. The sociology department at Harvard was established later than at Chicago or Columbia, and it "lacked the high degree of consensus among its central personalities which was possessed to such a degree at Columbia" (Shils 1980: 224). Nonetheless, by the late 1940s under the leadership of Talcott Parsons, "a deliberate attempt was made to integrate the theories of social structure, culture, and personality" (Shils 1980: 224).

The most obvious result of this attempt was *The Social System* (Parsons 1951). The concepts of structure and function had a long history in social thought (Turner and Turner 1990: 120 ff), but Parsons restored them to prominence. In his view, social order involved the interlinking of cultural, social, and personality systems whereby culture provided values and beliefs; socialization implanted them into people (personality systems); and properly socialized individuals enacted status-roles in the social system.

Systems survive, moreover, by meeting functional requisites of adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latency. In complex systems, distinct subsystems and structures evolve to meet these requisites. When they work, social order is maintained. When they falter, strain, disequilibrium, and disintegration can occur and set other dysfunctional processes in motion alongside efforts to restore social equilibrium.

On the relatively rare occasions when Parsons addressed conflict and change, strain was a crucial explanation. As we saw in the previous chapter, he cited strains that triggered anxiety, aggression, and wishful thinking to explain the appeal of McCarthyism. Daniel Bell (1955) similarly referenced strain as an explanation for the appeal of right-wing movements. More globally, Chalmers Johnson used the notion of a system out of equilibrium to explain revolutionary situations and movements worldwide (Snow and Davis 1995:190).

As structural-functionalism addressed macro-level strains, social psychology analyzed micro-level deprivation manifested in individuals. Robert Merton's work on reference groups (1957) demonstrated how individuals interpret their experience by reference to existing or desired group memberships. Such groups provide a basis of comparison for one's own position or a legitimation of beliefs or actions accepted by such groups.

Relative deprivation may be one result of such comparisons. When people judge themselves to be deprived relative to a plausible reference group, that grievance may provoke them into collective action. Other strands of social psychology were also relevant. Solomon Asch (1952) had documented the influence of the group on individual judgments, whereas Leon Festinger (1957) had explored the motivation provided by cognitive dissonance and the lengths to which people would go to resolve it.

These disciplinary ideas were accompanied by broader intellectual currents that continued to push sociology (and other disciplines) in a scientistic direction. This spirit was evident in Samuel Stouffer's logical positivist declaration of faith "that there can be developed in the social sciences a body of theory, operationally formulated and empirically tested, from which predictions can be made about what will happen in practical situations" (cited in Turner and Turner 1990: 112). This scientism filtered into sociology in the emphasis on middle range theory, in methodological specifications of independent and dependent variables, in hypothesis-testing, in the adoption of sophisticated statistical techniques, and in causal modeling of social processes.

There were, finally, the movements of the day (and the recent past) that seemed to invite explanations based on strain and deprivation. Fascism abroad and right-wing movements at home still attracted attention, and their grievances

seemed to fit the logic. Political movements, including the labor movement and the nascent civil rights movement, were also seen as fueled by grievances that were understandable in terms of social strain and relative deprivation. A final impetus came from overseas. As anticolonial and national liberation movements emerged, and as television projected images of first world affluence around the globe, the notion of relative deprivation acquired new resonance. As these disciplinary, intellectual, and movement influences coalesced, strain and deprivation theories acquired new prominence within sociology.

There were at least three versions of these theories that derived from the distinct theoretical assumptions of symbolic interactionism, social psychology, and structural-functionalism. The first of these had the longest history; thus we return to the Chicago School for a brief look at the role of strain and breakdown in their explanations of collective behavior.

CHICAGO REVISITED

From the beginning, the Chicago School defined collective behavior in contrast with institutional behavior and routine social functioning. Crowds and other forms of collective behavior were seen as existing apart from established routines, normal patterns, normative guidelines, and group traditions. The lack of such patterns links strain to collective behavior almost by definition.

In the absence of such controls, the basic mechanisms of collective behavior acquire their particular potency. Milling, circular reaction, and interstimulation proceed with few limits or restrictions, heightening suggestibility and the rapid transmission of moods and sentiments. The resulting social unrest is a further form of strain or breakdown and the proximate cause of collective behavior, which emerges "under conditions of unrest or disturbance in the usual forms of living or routines of life" (Blumer 1951: 171).

It is not just that collective behavior occurs outside of routine social processes; it often occurs because they break down and malfunction. One interpreter of the Chicago School thereby claims that "[a]ll these writers would no doubt agree with Park and Burgess in identifying collective behavior as the result of failed social control" (Rule 1988: 98). These failed controls involve both moral constraint and coercive state power, but the former was probably more important to Park and Burgess and reflects a Durkheimian influence in their thought (Rule 1988: 98).

Rule (1988) links the early Chicago School with European crowd theorists that he designates "irrationalists." For them, the cause of collective behavior in general and civil violence in particular "was the breakdown of rational control over human behavior through the spread of what one might call 'crowd mentality'" (Rule 1988: 93). For the early Chicago School, strain and breakdown were crucial triggers for collective behavior.

As we have seen, the later or second Chicago School broke with the premise of irrationality and developed a more complex theory of collective behavior. The role

of strain and breakdown remained central, however. Recall that Turner and Killian begin with a similar understanding of collective behavior as existing outside of usual social conventions and as bypassing established institutional patterns.

They then offer a more detailed portrait of the social order whose strains and breakdowns set the stage for collective behavior. It consists of a normative order, a social structure, and communication channels; all aspects of the social order are also underwritten by the taken-for-granted basis of everyday life.

With these specifications, one can identify a range of events that may trigger collective behavior. These include ambiguities or conflicts in normative expectations, strains and stresses in the social structure, and events that undermine the predictability and "naturalness" of everyday life. Although covering a lot of ground, these triggers describe different forms of strain and breakdown as precipitators of collective behavior.

Having said that, Turner and Killian add an important specification to this causal logic. They claim that although they may be necessary, "value conflicts, normative ambiguities, failures of role performance, and other 'breakdowns,' 'strains,' or 'dysfunctions' are not themselves sufficient to lead to collective behavior" (Turner and Killian 1987: 50). Several other factors must also come into play, as specified in their larger model of collective behavior (feasibility, timeliness, group formation, and so on).

Other work in this tradition also enlists strain and breakdown in accounting for collective behavior. Recall Kornhauser's (1959/2008) study of the politics of mass society. In such societies, people are atomized, and intermediate social groups that might provide social control and normative anchors are weak or absent. These conditions can be exacerbated by what Kornhauser calls discontinuities in authority, community, and society that increase the likelihood of collective behavior in general and extremist mass movements in particular.

A final example is Gusfield's (1963/1986) study of the temperance movement. In this and other symbolic crusades, the fuel is often strains and ambiguities surrounding norms, values, and status. Gusfield argues that it was status anxiety in a period of rapid social change that prompted white, native-born Protestants to rally around the cause of temperance as an expression of their values and a defense of their status.

This brief reprise of the Chicago School suggests three conclusions. First, the concepts of strain and breakdown are extremely broad; for better or worse, they link a highly diverse and varied set of conditions that can prompt collective behavior. Second, one or another version of strain or breakdown is consistently present in the Chicago School, from the early work of Park, Burgess, and Blumer; through the later contributions of Turner and Killian; and in the more empirical work of Kornhauser, Gusfield, and others. Finally, strain and breakdown alone cannot carry the whole burden of explaining collective behavior. As Turner and Killian argue, they may be necessary but are not sufficient by themselves to fully understand instances of collective behavior. The Chicago School thereby provides one version of strain and breakdown theories.

RELATIVE DEPRIVATION

If strain is necessary but not sufficient to explain collective action, we need to identify other causes or facilitators of that outcome. As Turner and Killian note, intersubjective interpretations always work in tandem with objective realities. This reasoning brings us to the notion of relative deprivation as a particular type of strain that arises when people make certain judgments about the circumstances they face. It is at the heart of a second group of strain-based theories of collective action.

The most straightforward way to link deprivation with collective action involves absolute deprivation and the hypothesis that the more deprived people become, the more likely they are to take action. This hypothesis, however, is suspect on at least two grounds. First, under conditions of absolute deprivation, the sheer struggle for survival often monopolizes people's time and energy so that despite having the motive, they lack the capacity to engage in collective action. Second, many of the groups that do engage in collective action are not the worst off, but rather have some resources already at their disposal. Both circumstances suggest the limits of explanations based on absolute deprivation and the plausibility of a more relative form of deprivation as a better explanation.

The concept of relative deprivation may also reconcile otherwise conflicting views of the origins of collective action in general and revolution in particular. James Davies (1962) finds this dilemma within Marx's work. On one hand, Marx suggested that "progressive degradation of the industrial working class would finally reach the point of despair and inevitable revolt" (Davies 1962: 5). On the other hand, Marx suggested that revolutionary aspirations would arise when workers' circumstances were improving but not as quickly as those of their capitalist overlords: "[O]ur desires and pleasures spring from society ... [b]ecause they are of a social nature, they are of a relative nature" (quoted in Davies 1962: 5).

Both views have partial validity and fit selected situations. Tocqueville, for example, identified the improving conditions of French society as an impetus to its revolution. A more rigorous and scientific theory of revolution, however, must resolve such contradictions and encompass a broader range of cases.

Davies seeks such a resolution by combining the two ideas in a specific sequence. "Revolutions are most likely to occur when a prolonged period of objective economic and social development is followed by a short period of sharp reversal" (Davies 1962: 6). This sequence is crucial because "[p]olitical stability and instability are ultimately dependent on a state of mind, a mood, in a society" (Davies 1962: 6). The combination of steady improvement followed by a sharp reversal thereby creates a protorebellious mood.

The role of expectations is central to this dynamic. Just as the low expectations of absolutely deprived groups can reinforce passivity, the rising expectations of better-off groups can spark action. Improving conditions create rising expectations. As long as conditions keep rough pace with expectations, people will be satisfied. If conditions deteriorate while expectations continue to rise, a tolerable gap between the two eventually becomes intolerable. People feel deprived relative to what they have

come to expect; the "crucial factor is the vague or specific fear that ground gained over a long period of time will be quickly lost" (Davies 1962: 8).

Davies supports this "J-curve" theory of revolution by examining three cases in some detail: Dorr's rebellion (1842), the Russian Revolution (1917), and the Egyptian Revolution (1952). He notes that all of these were progressive revolutions and that the theory may not apply to retrogressive ones. Although claiming explanatory value, Davies is cautious about the predictive value of the theory.

Prediction is difficult because the theory so explicitly directs attention away from objective circumstances and toward subjective judgments, moods, and feelings. Data on these conditions is notoriously elusive and unreliable, but without it the theory cannot be tested. This difficulty has often plagued explanations based on relative deprivation; analysts can more readily assess objective data so they infer relative deprivation based on objective trends, thereby undermining the logic of the theory. Despite this hurdle, the relative deprivation model became a major variant of strain theories of collective action and revolution in the 1960s.

Shortly after Davies's work appeared, James Geschwender (1968/1997) proposed a broader model that incorporated the J-curve hypothesis along with several alternatives. Geschwender's model is meant to apply to both movements and revolutions, and to include both progressive and reactionary forms of collective action.

This model begins by reiterating Davies's J-curve argument, now renamed the rise and drop hypothesis. In this scenario, sustained improvement triggers expectations of continued improvement so that when there is a reversal in people's situation, there is an intolerable gap between what people expect and what they actually receive.

Alternative scenarios might produce similar outcomes. One is the rising expectations hypothesis. This is a "softer" version of the J-curve hypothesis, in which there is no actual decline in people's objective situation but merely a declining rate of improvement. Even this may suffice to create a gap between expectations and conditions, and Geschwender applies this reading to the civil rights movement of the mid-1960s.

In a third scenario termed the relative deprivation hypothesis, Marx's observation about the social and relative nature of our desires is revisited. In this case, a group's conditions may have actually improved, but done so more slowly than the conditions of another group. If more rapidly improving groups are taken as a reference group for comparison, yet another gap between expectations and conditions is created.

Downward mobility provides a fourth scenario. In this case, a sense of dissatisfaction is created when people compare their current situation with a previous one when they were better off. Such downward mobility may take an absolute form, exemplified by the loss of a job or a substantial pay cut. It may also take a relative form, as when a formerly subordinate group makes substantial gains and narrows the gap between its status and that of one's own group.

The final version involves status inconsistency. Given that people occupy multiple statuses in complex societies, it is likely that some of their statuses will be inconsistent (higher or lower) with others. If a higher status becomes a point of

reference for judging a lower status, dissatisfaction will arise that may compel people into collective action to improve their lower status and resolve the inconsistency.

The distinctions among different types of relative deprivation suggest hypotheses about the intensity and direction of collective action. Thus, the rise and drop of the J-curve situation produces a bigger gap between what people expect and what they get than the rising expectations scenario. This may translate into a revolutionary movement in the former case and a reform movement in the latter.

The direction of collective action refers to its political orientation. The hypothesis is that the first three forms of dissatisfaction will produce forward-looking, progressive movements to improve a group's situation. Downward mobility, on the other hand, will produce a backward-looking, reactionary movement heavily reliant on scapegoating others. Status inconsistency cases could move in either direction.

Having explored different types of relative deprivation, Geschwender then proposes a basic mechanism that translates deprivation into action. That mechanism is cognitive dissonance. Thus, when people envision a possible state of affairs, believe they are entitled to it, and know they are not currently enjoying it, cognitive dissonance occurs. Altering one's environment and condition is one way of resolving dissonance. "Therefore, dissonance-reducing activities often take the form of social protest or revolutionary behavior" (Geschwender 1997: 104). Because these activities can take other forms as well, a basic challenge to this logic is to specify when cognitive dissonance leads to collective, politicized action rather than some other response.

Perhaps the most ambitious use of the concept of relative deprivation is Ted Gurr's analysis of *Why Men Rebel* (1970). He seeks to explain political violence by isolating factors that create the potential for collective violence, factors that politicize this potential, and factors that determine the magnitude and forms of political violence. He proposes almost one hundred distinct hypotheses about these variables; in appendices and asides about theory and method, Gurr endorses a rigorous, positivist approach to developing a genuinely scientific explanation of political violence.

Despite this complexity, Gurr claims that the "primary causal sequence in political violence is first the development of discontent, second the politicization of that discontent, and finally its actualization in violent action against political objects and actors" (Gurr 1970: 12–13). If violence originates in discontent, the latter originates in relative deprivation, which Gurr sees as "the basic, instigating condition for participants in collective action" (Gurr 1970: 13).

Relative deprivation is defined as a perceived discrepancy between value expectations and value capabilities; the former refers to what people believe they are entitled to, and the latter refers to what they believe they are capable of attaining. A perception of relative deprivation can thus take three forms. Decremental relative deprivation means that expectations remain constant while capabilities are perceived to decline. Aspirational relative deprivation means that capabilities remain constant while expectations increase. Finally, progressive relative deprivation occurs when expectations increase alongside decreasing capabilities.

Gurr emphasizes that people's perceptions are much more central than objective indicators when analyzing relative deprivation. Perceptions, in turn, rest upon

values and beliefs that shape how people form expectations about what they are due and how they evaluate their capacity to get it. Like Geschwender, the argument acknowledges complexity and variation, but then identifies a basic causal mechanism common to all these variations.

In this instance, the question is what translates relative deprivation (whatever its causes) into the potential for collective violence. Gurr's answer is not cognitive dissonance, but rather Dollard's postulation "that the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression" (quoted in Gurr 1970: 33). Gurr adds the notion of threat to that of frustration, concluding that "frustration—aggression and the related threat—aggression mechanisms provide the basic motivational link between [relative deprivation] and the potential for collective violence" (Gurr 1970: 36). The degree of frustration or threat is thus the primary determinant of the intensity of relative deprivation.

Having placed a psychological mechanism at the heart of his theory, Gurr then explores some social origins of relative deprivation. Rising expectations may be caused by a "demonstration effect" whereby a new reference group or a new ideology provides a standard for comparison. Perceptions of declining capabilities also have social origins in the changing economic status of a group, a loss of its ideational coherence, and the impact of regime power on a group's interests.

These factors condition the potential for collective violence; a related set of social forces may politicize that potential. These include cultural processes of socialization, tradition, and legitimation as well as group ideologies, utilities, and communication channels. Finally, the magnitude and form of political violence will vary as a function of the coercive balance between a regime and its challengers as well as the balance of institutional support for each side in a conflict.

Although Gurr offers the most extensive treatment of relative deprivation, his analysis—like so many examined to this point—remains somewhat tangential to social movements. Most episodes of political violence do not emerge from social movements, and most social movements do not engage in political violence. Moreover, Gurr's orientation as a political scientist and his propensity for psychologically reductionistic explanations did not sit well with many seeking a more sociological explanation.

Relative deprivation nonetheless provides a second example of strain-based theories alongside the Chicago School. The concept speaks most directly to the social psychology of individual motivation and grievance formation, and more tangentially to issues of recruitment and mobilization. Although attending to these micro-level issues, macro-issues and structural factors were less explored. The third example of strain-based theories addresses precisely this structural level.

SMELSER'S FUNCTIONALIST APPROACH

Neil Smelser's *Theory of Collective Behavior* appeared in 1962. The most distinctive aspect of this version of strain theory was its link to Talcott Parsons's more general, structural-functionalist theory of social action on the premise that "[c]ollective behavior is analyzable by the same categories as conventional behavior" (Smelser 1962: 23). This heritage reflects not only Smelser's own training but also the broader conceptual hegemony enjoyed by Parsonian sociology in the 1950s and early 1960s.

Needless to say, this involved a complex, conceptual scaffolding as Smelser constructed his theory. The broader theory of action from which it was derived identified four basic components of social action. Values provide broad guides to action. Norms govern the pursuit of goals specified by values. Motivation of individual energy compels people to act and organizes them into roles. Finally, situational facilities provide knowledge and resources for action. Values are the most general component of action, with each succeeding component bringing greater specificity.

Each of these four components has its own hierarchy of seven levels, moving from the most general values, norms, motivations, and facilities to increasingly more specific ones. Picture a grid of social action with twenty-eight cells consisting of seven levels of specificity for each of the four components of action. Against this backdrop, strain is defined as "an impairment of the relations among and consequently inadequate functioning of the components of action" (Smelser 1962: 47).

Although strain could appear anywhere, it tends to emerge at the more specific levels of each component of action. It is the response to strain that distinguishes conventional from collective behavior. Conventional behavior responds to strain by moving to a higher level of generalization, reconstituting the meaning of strain at that level, formulating new principles or solutions, and then moving back down to the original level and instituting a response appropriate to the level where the strain originated.

Collective behavior initially responds the same way by moving to a higher level of generalization. However, "[h]aving redefined the high-level component, people do not proceed to respecify, step by step, down the line to reconstitute social action. Rather, they develop a belief which 'short-circuits' from a very generalized component *directly* to the focus of strain" (Smelser 1962: 71; italics in original). This is also referred to as a "compressed" response to strain that jumps across intermediate levels of social action.

Smelser's reliance on Parsons's functionalism smuggled in a conservative or managerial bias. A close reading makes it hard to deny that this theory regards collective behavior as an inappropriate if not deviant response to strain *by definition.* The conception of collective behavior as a short-circuited, compressed response to strain carries an inherently negative judgment that later attracted fierce criticism.

There are other distinctive elements to the theory as well. It is presented as a "value-added" analysis, borrowing the concept from economics. In industrial production, commodities are produced through a sequence of activities in which each adds a distinct value to the final product. Smelser proposes that collective behavior emerges through a similar value-added process of cumulative determinants. Each step is necessary but not sufficient to produce collective behavior; taken together the steps are collectively sufficient. Moreover, the manner in which each step combines with previous ones narrows the range of possible outcomes, excluding some and increasing the likelihood of other forms of collective behavior.

disrupt quotidian routines and provoke collective action; research on prison riots provides examples here.

Snow et al. thus challenge the presumed dichotomy between breakdown and solidarity by specifying that breakdown involves patterns and expectancies of everyday life rather than associational ties between individuals. It is the combination of a breakdown in everyday routines alongside strong ties within groups that may be most likely to promote collective action.

Even in a time of harsh criticism, the work of Goldstone on revolution, Piven and Cloward on poor people's movements, and Snow et al. on the quotidian nature of social life illustrate the persistence of strain and breakdown explanations of particular types of collective action.

CONCLUSION

Strain, breakdown, and deprivation models have a long history. Building on Durkheim, they rose to prominence with the Chicago School, relative deprivation, and Smelser's theory. More recently, somewhat more carefully specified versions of these theories have exhibited a dogged persistence in the face of criticism and alternatives.

The career of breakdown theories has an even stranger turn. There is a sense in which these explanations did not disappear as much as they were rebranded. Consider how the resource mobilization and political process models—discussed in the next two chapters—dismissed breakdown but emphasized opportunity as a cause of collective action. Upon closer examination, there is considerable conceptual overlap between what prior theorists meant by strain or breakdown and what later theorists mean by opportunity. Where they differ is their valuational bias.

The terms "strain" and "breakdown" inherently connote negative, problematic conditions to be prevented, avoided, or repaired. As these terms functioned in classical breakdown theories, they cast a negative light on the appropriateness of collective behavior. That is why breakdown theorists have been more likely to see social control in a positive light and protester aggression in a negative light (Useem 1998). Thus, it was not just breakdown as a neutral causal mechanism that provoked critics; it was also the negative value judgments implicit in the concept that drew their fire.

The concept of opportunity was tailor-made for this situation. On the one hand, it allowed resource mobilization and political process theorists to paint collective action in a positive light. In contrast with "strain," "opportunity" inherently signifies something to be sought, desired, seized, enjoyed, valued, and maximized. On the other hand, it preserves a way of talking about structural change that facilitates collective action.

Although opportunity and breakdown are not the same thing, they do the same work in each theoretical tradition. Both refer to external, variable processes that increase the likelihood of collective behavior. To the extent that opportunity has become a stand-in for strain and breakdown, the latter never really disappeared from social movement theory (Buechler 2004).

The rebranding and decentering of strain theories occurred because of critiques that emerged in the 1970s in conjunction with the emergence of new paradigms. The very same criticisms that marginalized strain theories were also the gateway to resource mobilization and political process theories.

One of the earliest criticisms was part of Jerome Skolnick's (1969) report to a national commission on violence. It identified two prevailing explanations of collective violence: social strain leading to frustration and hostility, and breakdown of social control. Either way, the outcome is seen as unstable, disorderly, deviant behavior. Moreover, participants are portrayed as destructive and irrational, whereas authorities are seen as normal and reasonable.

Skolnick's evidence suggested that such explanations were deeply flawed. First, the concepts of frustration and tension are too vague and psychologistic to explain the urban riots of the 1960s. Moreover, they obscure the political nature of those riots and the fact that otherwise normal, rational people participated in them. Finally, the violence was less a quality of the rioters than an emergent product of the interactions between protesters and authorities. Skolnick's critique thus challenged several assumptions of traditional strain and breakdown explanations.

A second challenge came from the Tillys (Tilly, Tilly, and Tilly 1975), and it was based on evidence from a century of collective action in Europe. Like Skolnick, they challenged stereotypical accounts of violent crowds and irrational masses by recasting violence as an interactive product of protesters and authorities and pointing to the group interests and reflective calculations that often motivate protesters.

More broadly, they challenged breakdown theories because they "suffer from irreparable logical and empirical difficulties. Some sort of solidarity theory should work better everywhere. No matter where we look, we should rarely find uprooted, marginal, disorganized people heavily involved in collective violence. All over the world we should expect collective violence to flow out of routine collective action and continuing struggles for power" (Tilly, Tilly, and Tilly 1975: 290).

These critiques eventually targeted the entire "classical model" of social movements, including "mass society, collective behavior, status inconsistency, rising expectations, relative deprivation, and Davies' J-curve theory of revolution" (McAdam 1982: 6). Despite variations, they all rest on a general causal sequence in which some background condition of structural strain provokes a disruptive psychological state that leads to a social movement (McAdam 1982).

There are several problems with this model. The claim that social movements are a response to social strain ignores the larger political context in which movements arise, and assumes a mechanistic and linear relationship between macro-level strain and micro-level behavior. The identification of individual discontent as the proximate cause of social movements presumes an abnormal psychological profile that sharply distinguishes participants from nonparticipants in collective behavior. The individual level of analysis also ignores how individual mental states are translated into genuinely collective phenomena. Finally, the individualistic emphasis denies the political dimension of collective behavior by implying that it is nothing more than a "convenient justification for what is at root a psychological phenomenon" (McAdam

1982: 17). When such assumptions guide the analysis, collective behavior is more likely to be perceived as deviant behavior than political contention.

The work of Goldstone, Piven and Cloward, and Snow et al. discussed previously demonstrates that there were creative ways to sustain more carefully specified versions of strain and breakdown explanations. But the criticisms just reviewed were sufficient to move such theories to the margins as fundamentally new approaches took their place. By the mid- to late 1970s, social movement theory was undergoing a major paradigm shift.

Part III

Paradigm Shifts